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Jamie went out and stood in the street to think.— $Page\ 29$.

THE CHOOSING BOOK

MAUD LINDSAY



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THE CHOOSING BOOK

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Dedicated to

MARY THAYER AND MARY SAMPSON,

SOME OF WHOSE DEAR CHARACTERISTICS

I HAVE BORROWED FOR TINTIL AND DICOMILL

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story-tellers in the Border Land; everybody agreed to that. But if anybody asked which was the better of the two-well, that was a hard question.

All Tintil's tales were about a Wood that was called Enchanted, but where this Wood was, he never told. Even when the children begged him to show whether it were this way or that way, he would only say:

"Nobody knows,

Yet it is a place where every one goes."

Or perhaps he would answer, "You must find it yourself," and that was what every child longed to do.

Whenever Tintil came up or down the road, with his little flute in his hand, and his cap, with a gay feather in it, on the side of his head, and a red leaf or yellow cowslip pinned on his coat, there was always a crowd to meet him, and it was, "Tintil, tell us a tale," from the time he came till the time he went.

Nobody knew where he lived. He was here to-day and gone to-morrow. And nobody knew whether Tintil were his real name or not, but it made no difference. It was a pleasant name to say, and suited him exactly.

He was a rover, but Dicomill was a stay-at-

home. Dicomill lived in the house where he was born, which was the mill, and though he liked well to hear of other people's travels, and learned more of them than you would think, he had never been farther than the next market town.

He worked in the mill, and was often covered from his head to his toes with the dust of corn and the dust of wheat. It was easy to tell where he got his name. At first, it is true, he had been called "Dick of the Mill," but this had soon been shortened to Dicomill, which suited him exactly and was just as pleasant to say as Tintil.

On fine evenings when the wheat and the corn had been ground and the mill was quiet, Dicomill would sit in the doorway of his home and tell stories to any one who cared to listen.

There was always a crowd of children, and grown people, too, around him.

Dicomill's stories had nothing magic in them. They might have happened anywhere in the Border Land, and sometimes his listeners thought that he was telling of people whom they knew. But if they said this to him, he would only shake his head and laugh. He was no great talker, anyway, outside his taletelling.

Now, one evening just as Dicomill had finished a story and the children were begging for another, Tintil came down the road playing a gay little tune on his flute and stepping along as if he were leading a May dance. Dicomill was the first to see him.

"Now you shall hear a tale worth two of mine," he said to the children, and he called to Tintil, asking him to stop and give them the news from the Wood that was called Enchanted.

Tintil was willing enough to stop in such good company, but before he could begin a story some one in the crowd at the mill door had a great thought and spoke it out. "Why should not Tintil and Dicomill have a contest of tales?" he said. "Then we can decide once for all which is the better story-teller, a question that nobody can answer now."

Everybody was well pleased with this plan, especially the children, and the mayor of the town, who had come to smoke a pipe with Dicomill's father, the old miller, put his head out of the door to say that he would give six shillings to the one who was judged the winner of the contest.

"And every listener shall have a vote," said he.

But though Tintil and Dicomill told story for story till their tongues were tired, the question could not be decided. If one listener voted for Tintil, another was sure to choose Dicomill, and so it went till the mayor gave three shillings to each of the story-tellers and won himself the name of being a very wise mayor indeed. There were only two who were not satisfied with the settlement, and these two were no other than Tintil and Dicomill themselves.

"I know good tales when I hear them," said Tintil, "and I vote for Dicomill."

"My tales are as plain as a mill-sack," said Dicomill, "but Tintil's tales are woven of rainbow stuff, and the prize should be his." It is even said that they bought gifts for each other with the mayor's shillings.

That is as it may be, and was long ago, but when you have read their stories from beginning to end you may still vote for Tintil or Dicomill. All that you need do is to make your choice between them, and tell it to everybody you can find who has read the book, too. That is a merry ball to set a-rolling!

Or, if you like, you may cast your vote in this way:

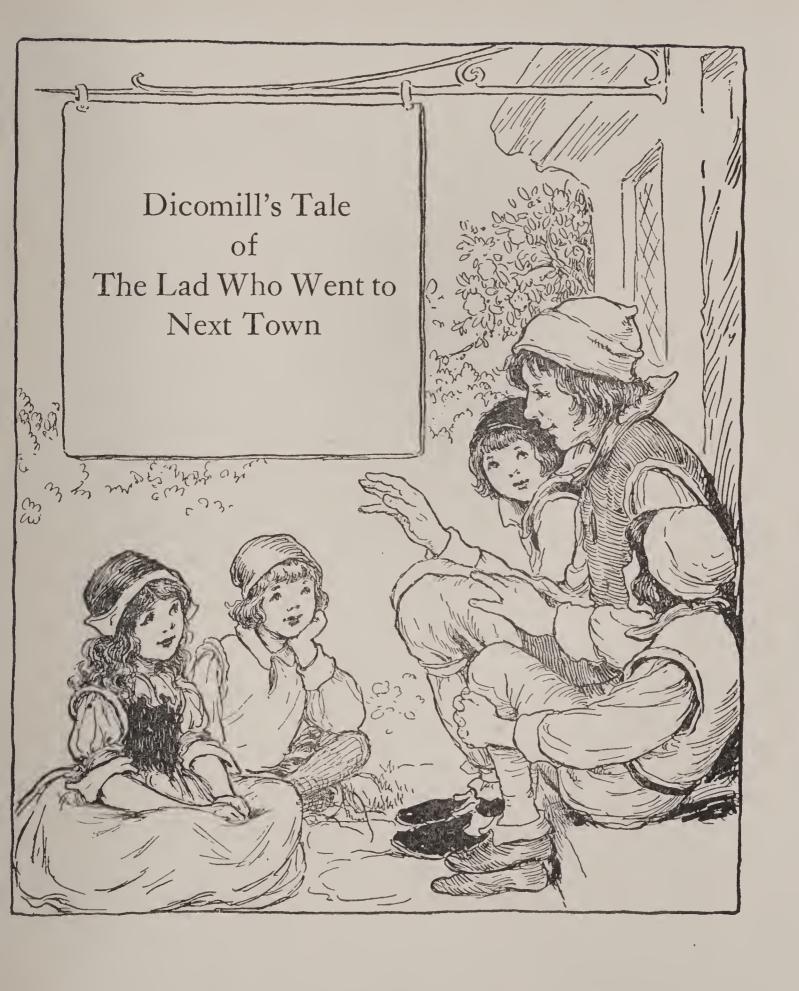
Draw a circle for Tintil or a square for Dicomill on a bit of paper and give it to the wind. Yes, the wind is the only postman you can trust in such an important matter. He will take your vote somewhere, you may be sure of that.

But whether you choose Tintil or Dicomill,

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here is a rhyme that is your very own, for it was made for you:

The child who loves a story-book
A happy child is he,
Who sits at home, yet roams abroad
A wonder-world to see.





THE LAD WHO WENT TO NEXT TOWN

HERE was once upon a time a lad who made up his mind to go to the town next to Wraye where he had lived all the days of his life.

Next Town, he had heard, was a very large place with almost as many people as there were in London; or at least many more than in the town of Wraye. There were great shops in Next Town where grand things might be bought for little or nothing, and a church, the tower of which was higher by far than the tower of Wraye, and, besides all the other sights to be seen, the mayor of Next

Town rode out in a coach drawn by three white horses abreast; or so it was told. But the lad determined to find out the truth of everything for himself.

"And while you are there, Jamie," said his mother, "you must buy me a needle with a gold eye. It would be nothing but pleasure to sew with a gold-eyed needle, and that there are such things I am sure, for your own aunt knows a woman who got one, either from Next Town or a peddler, I forget which."

His mother was not the only one who wished something bought in Next Town, for no sooner had the news of his going spread than the innkeeper's wife came hurrying in, with a shilling in her hand, to ask Jamie to bring her a pint of pickled plums.

"Never in the world have I eaten a pickled

plum," said she, "and if they can be bought anywhere, it must be in Next Town."

A very small child followed the innkeeper's wife. He had heard that there were no end of toys in Next Town, and, as he had a halfpenny to spend, nothing would do but that Jamie must bring him a pony made of lead.

Then came the beadle, who was a most important man in Wraye. He wanted a necktie to wear on Sundays, and his wife wanted a bonnet.

"I've little skill in choosing bonnets," said Jamie, but the beadle would not listen to that. In Next Town there were such beautiful bonnets that Jamie could not choose amiss.

It seemed as if everybody in Wraye needed something that must be bought in Next Town. Somebody wanted a poker and tongs,

and somebody else a pepper-pot. The parson came to bless the lad and asked him to fetch him a goose-quill pen, and a ploughboy who liked to sing brought a penny for songs. And there were others who wanted this, that, and what not, till Jamie began to fear that he could never remember all that he was told. That is, he was afraid until he thought of asking the town clerk, who was skilful with words, to put everything into a rhyme for him.

"Then they can jingle through my head and never get lost," said he.

The town clerk was more than half a day at his task, and, when he had finished, he had to teach Jamie the rhyme, for, though the lad was clever enough about some things, he could neither read nor write. It was a fine rhyme that the clerk had made, and easy to learn. Before Jamie started from home he knew every word of it:

"A gold-eyed needle, and a big-headed pin,
A bright tin saucepan to cook the porridge in,
A one-legged poker, and a two-legged tongs,
A pint of pickled plums, and a pennyworth of songs,
A pepper-pot, a ginger-jar, a pony made of lead,
A ribbon for a lassie to wear upon her head,
A necktie for the beadle, a bonnet for his wife;
The parson wants a goose-quill pen, the baker needs a knife."

All the way to Next Town Jamie was saying the rhyme, and when he got there he was so eager to do his errands, and get rid of other folk's money, that, before he had looked at anything, he hurried into a shop.

The shopkeeper was glad enough to see him

for, to tell the truth, Jamie was the first customer that day.

"What do you lack, young sir?" he asked; and all at once the words that Jamie thought he knew so well began to jingle through his head at such a rate that it was hard for him to speak at all.

"If you please," he said at last, "I want—I want:

A big-headed needle, and a two-legged pin,
A bright, tin bonnet to cook a beadle in,
A gold-eyed pony, and a pennyworth of tongs,
A pint of pepper porridge, a ginger-jar of songs,
A goose-quill ribbon, a necktie made of lead,
A saucepan for a lassie to wear upon her head,
A plum-pot for the baker, a one-legged knife;
The parson wants a pickled pen, the poker needs a
wife."

"Did you say a pickled pen?" asked the shopkeeper, whose eyes were by this time as round as saucers with astonishment.

"If I did I was mistaken," said poor Jamie.
"It was a pickled parson that I meant."

But that only made a bad matter worse. The shopkeeper and all his prentices began to shake their heads. The things that Jamie wished were not to be bought in their shop, nor in any other shop; no, not even in the great city of London.

Jamie went out and stood in the street to think. Something was wrong, that was plain to see, but what? The words had all rhymed, wife with knife, and pin with in, and tongs with songs; and if he had left a word out he did not know it. Something had been pickled. He tried first one thing and then another, but the more he tried to remember, the more puzzled he grew. He would not give up, though, and, by and by, he felt so certain that he had learned his rhyme again that he went into the shop once more.

The shopkeeper came to meet him as if he had never laid eyes on him before. "What do you lack?" said he, and Jamie began:

"A gold-headed beadle, and a tin pan made of lead,
A necktie for a saucepot to wear upon its head,
A ribbon for the plum-jar, and porridge for the tongs,

A two-legged pony, and a pint of ginger songs,
A bright-eyed poker, and a big, pickled pin,
A pen-quill for the baker to cook a pepper in,
A pennyworth of parsons, a needle and his wife,
The goosie wants a bonnet, the lassie needs a knife.

"No, no," cried poor Jamie. "The lassie does not need a knife, and there is nothing else left for her to have. I must begin all over."

But the shopkeeper and his prentices were pushing him out of the shop by this time, and they shut the door behind him as if they meant to see no more of him.

He stood in the road not knowing where to go, nor what to do, and he might be standing there yet if he had not thought of the town clerk who had made the rhyme.

"He can get it straight if anybody can," said Jamie, and even though the mayor of Next Town was going by, not with a coach and three horses, but in a fine new gig and driving a spotted pony, the lad would not stop to look at him.

He did not stop till he was safe in the town

of Wraye and, what is more, he was so glad to get home that he gave back their pennies, and halfpennies, and shillings to his neighbors and never went to Next Town again; or so it is told.





GUY OF GODOLPHIN GOES HUNTING

NCE upon a time Guy of Godolphin rode to the hunt merrily, merrily, merrily; and no wonder. That very day a little son had come to the castle hall where a child had been wished for and longed for, oh, these many years, and his father was riding, merrily, merrily, merrily, to kill a deer for the christening feast.

Guy of Godolphin was a great hunter, so great that a minstrel had made a song about him:

"Tantivy, tantivy, away and away,
Guy of Godolphin goes hunting to-day.

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Up now and follow past brake and past brae, Guy of Godolphin goes hunting to-day.

"Tantivy, tantivy, at peep of the morn
Guy of Godolphin is blowing his horn,
Up now and follow by ash-tree and thorn,
Guy of Godolphin is blowing his horn."

There was a third verse, too, which told of his home-coming and some people liked this best of all:

"Tantivy, tantivy, what news do we hear?
Guy of Godolphin comes home with King Deer,
Up now and follow for feast and for cheer,
Guy of Godolphin comes home with King Deer."

All that the minstrel sang was true. Guy of Godolphin was always the leader on a hunting

day, his horn could be heard for miles around, and, when he came galloping home in the evening, nothing would do but that he must call his friends and neighbors in to feast with him on the good deer-meat that he had brought from the deep forest. And the castle-hall was filled with laughter and songs.

But, on the day that his little son was born, the great hunter was late for the hunt. There was no one left to follow him and, though he blew his horn both loud and long, he had no answer to his call. He rode last and he rode alone but, for all that, he went merrily, merrily, merrily.

Soon the christening feast would be held and all the countryside would come to see the little son. Little Guy of Godolphin, they were sure to call him. And soon again, for children grow fast, little Guy would ride with his father, away and away.

"I shall take him before me on my saddle here," said Guy of Godolphin, smiling at the thought.

He was so full of his pleasant plans that he paid no heed to the turn of the road, and so it happened that, instead of riding to the deep forest where the other hunters were, he came, by and by, to the Wood that is called Enchanted, where no one had ever gone hunting before.

All the days of his life Guy of Godolphin had heard of the Enchanted Wood and longed to see it, but now that he was there it seemed to him like any other wood; at least this was his first thought.

But, though there were trees in plenty and

thickets and mosses and little streams and shining lakes in the Wood, of living creatures there was neither sight nor sound. Not a bird chirped in the tree-tops, not a fox nor a hare stirred in the bushes, not a deer trampled through the bracken. It was as if they had gotten word of the hunter's coming and hidden themselves away.

But Guy of Godolphin was not disheartened by this. He was as sure that there were deer in the Enchanted Wood as he was of his own skill as a hunter.

"Let them lie ever so quiet, I shall find them," said he.

He rode softly now and slowly, keeping watch on every side. A bent twig might mean that deer had passed and a broken branch show the way that they had gone.

Guy of Godolphin knew all the signs of a wood, and some day he would teach them to his little son.

"I shall make a great hunter of him," he said to himself.

He had ridden by ash-tree, and thorn-tree, he had ridden past brake, and past brae, without seeing so much as a lizard sunning himself, or hearing a sound but the beat of his horse's hoofs, and he was just turning aside to a dell among the trees when rustle, rustle, snap, snap, something stirred in the thicket, something coming his way.

He had scarcely time to stop his horse and raise his gun when the bushes opened and out came a milk-white doe and a fawn as brown as the velvet lining of a chestnut-burr.

"O-ho!" cried Guy of Godolphin, "Here is

meat and to spare for a christening feast"; but for all that he lowered his gun.

"There are more deer in the Wood than these," he said, and he rode away as well pleased and happy as though the meat for the feast lay across his saddle-bow.

When the little son was old enough he would bring him to this Wood that was called Enchanted and tell him of the doe and fawn, and how he had spared them.

"It will make a fine tale," said Guy of Godolphin.

Mile upon mile he followed the winding road, or watched and waited in hidden places, keeping as quiet as the Wood itself, but no deer came.

Perhaps, after all, he had been too quick in sparing both doe and fawn, he thought. The fawn was young, scarcely more than a summer old, and might have gone free, but there was many a hunter who would have been glad to take home a doe on a hunting day. Why, the minstrel had a song about something like that:

"Off to the forest I will go,

To shoot my shaft at a dappled doe;

King or queen could never wish

To dine upon a daintier dish."

And there was nothing finer for a lady's feet than doeskin shoes.

"Well, well, next time I shall be wiser," said Guy of Godolphin, and the words had scarcely left his tongue when rustle, rustle, snap, snap, he heard something breaking through a thicket, something coming his way.

He was just raising his gun to his shoulder

when the bushes opened and out came, not King Deer that he longed to see, but the white doe and brown fawn as fearless and gay as if there were not a hunter in the world. And, in spite of all that he had thought and said of dainty dishes and doeskin shoes, down came Guy of Godolphin's gun.

"But have a care, little folk," he called as he rode away. "Another meeting might make a different tale."

The Wood was as quiet as the bottom of a well as he rode on and on and on. The shadows that had been gathering in the dells and hollows for an hour past began to stretch across the paths and roads. Night was coming and the meat for the christening feast was still for him to win.

"A feast for a hunter's son without deer-

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meat would be a sorry feast indeed," said Guy of Godolphin.

Rather than that he would ride back to find the doe and fawn again, and this time he would spare neither the one nor the other. If all the countryside came to the christening there would be need of plenty. And did not the minstrel sing of a little prince who wore

"A golden chain about his throat
And on his back a fawnskin coat?"

"Why not such a coat for my little son?" thought Guy of Godolphin.

He had more than half decided to turn back when, patter, patter, he heard the sound of little feet on the road behind him and, when he looked, what should he see but the white doe and brown fawn as fearless and free as if there were no one in the Wood but themselves.

"Here is good fortune," said the great hunter, and it might have gone hard with the doe and fawn if it had not been for little Guy of Godolphin and his mother.

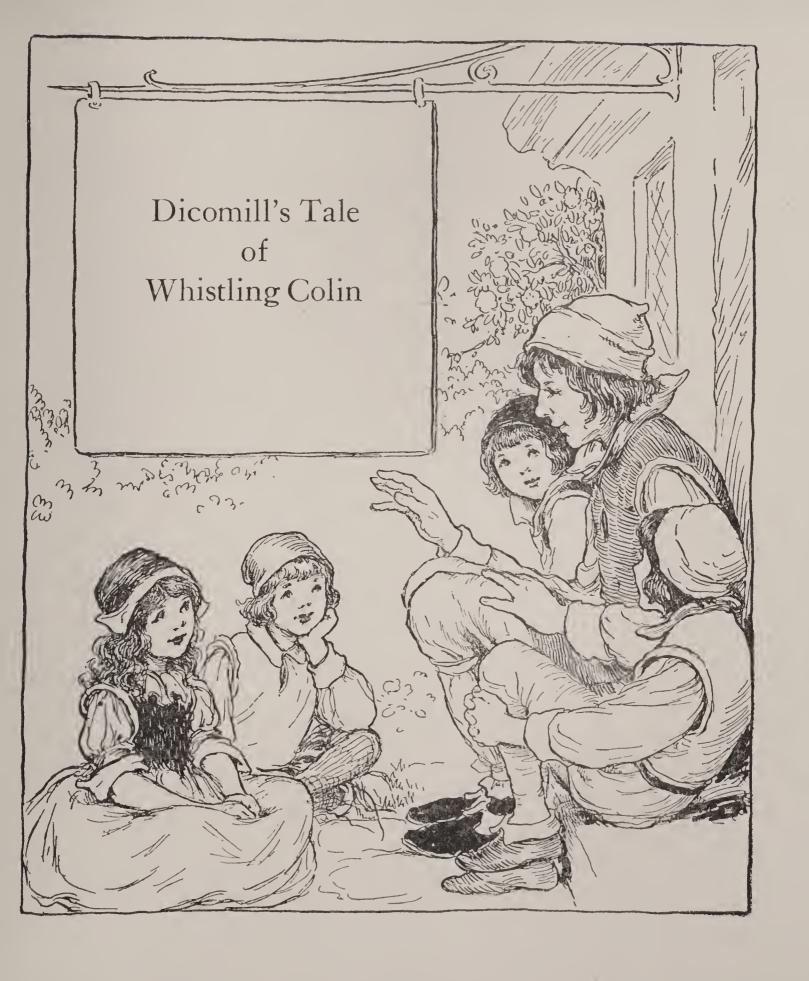
But if you ask me what they had to do with it, all I can tell you is what Guy of Godolphin himself told the little wild folk when once again he left them unharmed and unfrightened in the Wood that is called Enchanted.

"Look you," he said, "it is because of my little son and his mother that I let you go free." And though he went home with nothing to show for his watching and waiting he rode merrily, merrily, merrily. Oh, never was he so merry before!

There was no deer-meat at the christening feast, but no one missed it. Why, what with

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dainty dishes and laughter and singing there never was such a feast before or since. The minstrel made a song about it and put into the song all the tale that you have heard and more besides. Some people thought it was the sweetest song he had ever made, and if I knew the words and tune of it I would sing it to you.





WHISTLING COLIN

NCE upon a time a boy named Colin was wishful to go into the world to seek his fortune, and there was but one thing against it. He was as willing and strong as any lad but, except for whistling, he could do nothing beyond the ordinary.

"And whistling will make no fortune," said his father as the lad trudged away at last. But his mother was not so sure of this.

"What a body does best can always be turned to account, and whistling makes friends, I've noticed that," said she.

Whether she was right about the fortune or

not you shall hear in good time, but as for the friends, she never spoke a truer word. Everybody had a pleasant look or a smile for Colin as he went by whistling his merry tunes; and, for his part, he was as well pleased with the world as he had thought he should be.

All the while he travelled he kept his eyes open for a chance to earn an honest penny, and once, as he was looking about, he saw a little house, in front of which grew a cherry-tree full of fruit.

"It is just such a house that I shall have when I have made my fortune," thought Colin; "and in the yard I shall have a cherry-tree."

This was his first thought, and his next was that the cherries were ripe for picking.

"Here's work for somebody, and who wants it more than I?" he said to himself, and spy-

ing an old woman in the doorway of the house he made bold to speak to her.

"Good dame," said he, "your cherries are ripe and ready to fall, and here am I to gather them for you at as little pay as a lad may ask. Promise me but a twopence and you shall see how nimble I am."

But the old woman was not so willing as Colin.

"Many an idle lad travels on the King's highway, and how do I know that more cherries would not go into your mouth than into my basket?" asked she.

Colin had a mind to tell her that if she did not know an honest lad when she saw one her cherries might stay on the tree till the birds pecked them, but he remembered a saying of his mother's: "Hasty words prove nothing." So he began to cast about in his mind for an answer that would convince the old woman. And, as was nothing but natural, while he thought, he whistled.

Immediately the old woman's face which had been as dark as a rain cloud began to lighten.

"Barking dogs never bite, and whistling mouths eat no cherries," said she, and hurrying into the house she brought out a great basket and thrust it into the lad's hand.

"Whistle and pick," said she; "but no whistling, no twopence, mind you that."

Whether Colin liked the bargain or not, he went to work gathering the cherries and whistling manfully, though before the basket was filled it was but doleful music that he made. The old woman was pleased, however.

"Tis an honest lad that you are," said she, "and you may have a cherry as well as the twopence. Come, help yourself."

What Colin thought of her offer he did not say, but he would not refuse it, and when he had eaten the cherry he put the stone in his pocket.

"Perhaps she has given me more than she thinks, for who knows but that I may plant this stone in my own dooryard some day, and have a tree from it?" he said to himself.

While he was picking the old woman's cherries he felt that once he was through with his task he would never whistle again; but he had not gone a mile when he was at it as gaily as ever, for night was coming and the road was lonely. He had good need of a lively tune to keep him company.

He was glad enough when he saw, a little farther on, the light of a candle shining through the cracks of a hut by the wayside.

"Now here is a place to sleep," thought he, but when he knocked at the door it was a cold welcome he got.

"Be off with you for a thief and a robber knocking at poor folk's doors after nightfall," called the goodman of the house, and, willy-nilly, Colin would have been forced to go if the goodman's wife had not had more wits than her husband.

"Do you not know the difference between a thief and a whistling laddie?" she asked, for she had heard Colin's gay tune; and she opened the door without more ado.

Colin got a night's lodging and a bowl of porridge, besides, and he might have had

them for nothing except for his wish to pay as he went, which his mother had told him was the best way to make a fortune.

He was up and on his travels as soon as the sun shone, but, though he did not fail to seek it, work was harder to find than friendly words. Dusk caught him again trudging along the road and wondering where he would sleep that night.

Far away he saw twinkling lights in many windows, but before he came to any house or inn, he spied a man who was standing where two roads met and peering anxiously, first at one, and then the other as if he were expecting some one. The moment he laid eyes on Colin he hastened to meet him.

"Good lad," said he, "have you not met Tall Tammas the piper, a bony man, with a head as red as the plaid he wears, and kilts as red as his head?" But seeing by Colin's face what the answer would be, he did not wait for it.

"Perhaps 'tis a harper you've seen," he inquired, "an old hoary man with a beard that reaches below his waist, and a grey cloak around him? I would not give Gibbie Greycloak for twenty pipers if you have seen him," said he. But Colin had seen no harper, old or young.

"Then what of a fiddler with one eye blue, and one eye brown," said the man, "a lively young fellow like yourself, who likes his soup to the last wee drop. It would mean a sixpence for you to-night if you've seen Larry Lickladle. Now, what do you say to that, my lad?" he asked.

There was but one thing that Colin could

say, and if he said it with more laughter than politeness, it is no great wonder.

"No," said he choking over the word. And, "No," again.

"Then a plague on all pipers, and harpers, and fiddlers who cannot be found when the young laird and his company at the Inn are waiting for a tune to stir their feet," cried the man, and he would have been off and away to seek the music-makers if Colin had not stopped him.

"I can blow no pipes, nor play a harp, nor scrape a fiddle," said he, "but for a supper and bed I can whistle a tune to stir any man's feet, let him be who he will."

What he promised, he did, for if there was anybody at the Inn who kept his feet still that night, it has never been told; and as for the young laird, he was so pleased with the laddie that nothing would do but that Colin must ride with him to Edinboro Town and be a footman in his great house there.

Colin was willing enough to go, though when he saw what the young laird's footmen had to wear he may have wished that he had come on his own feet, and found a living for himself.

Their coats were as green as meadow grass, and their breeches as red as a cock's comb. The buckles on their shoes were as bright as a new tin pan, and their wigs were as white as a miller's coat. When Colin was decked out like the rest, his own mother would scarcely have known him.

Then what should he have to do but stand in one of the laird's grand rooms to watch the company come and go; and wearying work he found it.

He had not been there long enough for a pot of porridge to cool when his feet in his new shoes began to ache. His wig was too warm, and his coat was too tight, and he would have given all the fortune that he might make in Edinboro Town for a breath of the wind as it blew from the hills in the North Country. But seeing nothing else to do, he braced his back against the wall, and to pass the time away as best he could, began to whistle.

Alack and alas, he was not well into his tune when all the other footmen came running to hustle him out of the room as if he had the plague that the innkeeper had been so free in wishing on Tammas the piper, and Gibbie the harper, and Larry the fiddler.

"Dolt, unmannerly lout, country clown," they cried. "Out with you and your whistling!"

It was enough to bewilder any honest lad, and, to make matters worse, whom should he see coming toward him but the young laird's father, the old laird.

The other servants went hurrying away at the sight, and Colin might have gone, too, if he had not remembered what his mother had told him as many times as the years of his life: "If you have done no wrong, stand your ground." So stand he did, though it was no easy matter when the old laird was looking him over as if he were a sheep at market.

But, when he had looked his fill, what should the old laird do but offer to make a shepherd of Colin on his own fair lands in the North Country. "And keep up your whistling. I like it," said he.

In less time than it takes to make a tale like this, Colin was on his way to the old laird's land, dressed in the clothes he had worn from home, and gay as a blackbird.

But his adventures were not at an end, as you shall hear. He had not gone a furlong on the king's highway when he saw three men coming from three different directions, and hurrying as fast as if the king had sent for them.

One was a tall, bony man with a head as red as the plaid that he wore, and kilts as red as his head, and he carried bagpipes on his back.

One of them had a harp. He was an old, hoary man, with a beard that reached below

his waist, and a cloak that was grey as a Scotch mist, and a little the worse for long wear and rough weather.

And one was a fiddler, a gay young fellow like Colin himself, with one eye blue and one eye brown, though this could not be seen far off.

"Good day to you, Tall Tammas the piper, and old Gibbie Greycloak, and young Larry Lickladle," called Colin as soon as he laid eyes upon them. "And where are you going so early and fast?" asked he.

"To quiet the Earl of Cockburn's bairn and turn his crying into laughter," answered the three in one breath as it were.

If Colin thought their errand was a strange one, he said nothing of the kind but wished them "good luck and safe journey," as his mother had taught him. And all at once they were friends with him.

"Come away with us to the Earl of Cockburn's house," said they, "for to hear the grand music that we'll make there is worth a day's journey."

So off went Colin with the greatest piper, and greatest harper, and greatest fiddler to be heard anywhere, if what they told of themselves was true.

Long before they came to the castle-house of Cockburn they could hear the bairn at his crying, and when they went into the hall they spied him in his nurse's arms, weeping and wailing as if he had just begun. And all because the earl and his lady had ridden to see the sights at the Fair, and he was left behind.

Then Tall Tammas the piper made haste

to throw aside his plaid that was as red as his own red hair, and taking his pipes he began to play. The sound that he made filled the Earl of Cockburn's house and went beyond till everything on the place heard it.

The pigs in the pen began to squeal, the sheep to bleat, and the horses to neigh. The geese and the ducks and the hens were fairly beside themselves with the music, and it is even said that Crummie the cow began to dance. But the Earl of Cockburn's bairn only cried the louder.

Then old Gibbie Greycloak took his harp, and touching the strings made a music that would almost have torn your heart out of your body with the sweetness of it, if you could have heard it. If it had not been so gay a tune it would have been a sad one, and if it had not

been so sad it would have been gay, but whichever it was, the Earl of Cockburn's bairn only cried the louder.

So Larry Lickladle stood up for his turn and a lively turn it was. No sooner had he scraped his bow across the fiddle-strings than all the maids left their spinning, and churning, and cooking, and cleaning, and all the lads left their ploughing, and planting, and came running and crowding to hear him play. But the Earl of Cockburn's bairn only cried the louder.

"There's nothing to do but to fetch the earl and his lady home from the Fair, though it is an angry man he will be this day," said the bairnie's nurse, and she would have done that very thing if Colin had not begun to whistle just then.

It was not a loud tune that he whistled but there were trills in it, and quivers, and quavers, and twitterings till it almost seemed as if a flock of merry blackbirds were in the castle hall.

He had not well begun when the bairn turned his head to listen; when he was half through, the wean was as quiet as if he were in his mother's arms; and by the time the tune was finished the child was as full of laughter as he had been of tears.

Colin might have had a home and plenty to do without going a step farther, but he had no wish to live in great houses. When he had feasted with his good friends, the piper, and harper, and fiddler, in the castle kitchen, he went his way to the old laird's land.

As time went on, he came to be head-



The child was as full of laughter as he had been of tears. $Page\ 66.$

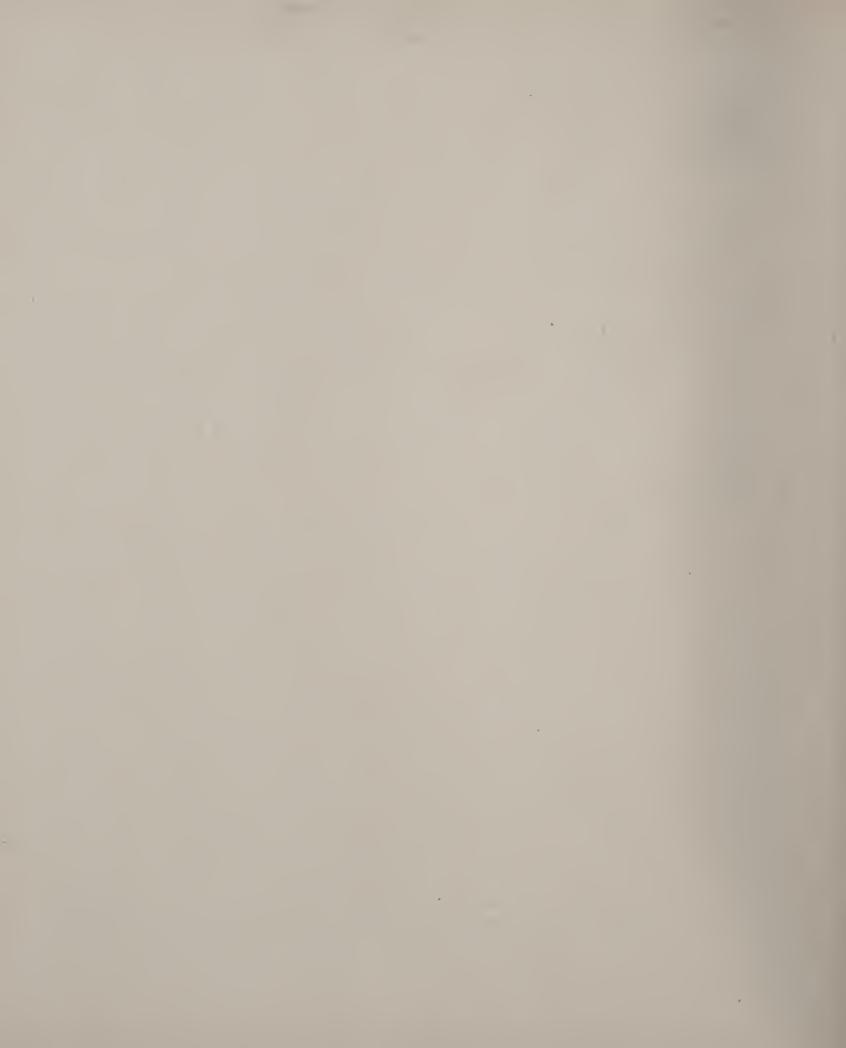


shepherd there, with one pound, six shillings, and a sixpence for pay, and a wife to help him save it, which was fortune enough for him.

And if you had chanced to go by his dooryard you would have seen a cherry-tree growing there.







THE FOREST MOTHER

N a May Day when all the world was green and gold and all the sky was gold and blue, Little Guy of Godolphin, the great hunter's son, went alone to the Wood that is called Enchanted.

He had not meant to go there. He had run out of the castle gates to catch a gay feather that was blowing about in the wind; then he had chased a butterfly that flew on and on just out of reach; next it was a bird with crimson wings that he had followed; and then all at once there was the Wood.

He did not even know that it was an Enchanted Wood, but no sooner had he seen it

than he wanted to go in. He was not afraid. He was not afraid of anything, and nothing was afraid of him. As soon as he was in the Wood all the little wild folk came flying or running to peep down from the trees or out of the thickets to see him.

The robin was the first to spy him, and the robin told the wood-thrush:

"See here! See here! Little Guy of Godolphin who loves all birds has come."

The thrush told a hare, and the hare a squirrel, and the squirrel in turn took the news to a fleet-footed fox:

"Good news! Good news! Little Guy of Godolphin who loves all birds and animals has come."

"The white doe must hear of this," said the fox, and he ran without stopping to draw

breath till he found her feeding upon green grass in a far-away place with all the other deer.

"Have you heard the news?" he cried. "Little Guy of Godolphin, the hunter's son, has come alone to the Enchanted Wood."

Then the white doe hurried away to the Wood as swiftly as if her feet were shod with quicksilver. The child had not even made up his mind about the way he should go before she came in sight of him. And, when he sat down on a mossy stone to eat a honey-cake that he had brought from home in his pocket, she went softly and lay down beside him.

He was not startled to see her for he had heard of deer, does and fawns and great stags, too, ever since he could remember; and, besides, he thought of all animals as pets. The doe had scarcely settled herself before he was stroking her head and offering her honeycake.

He had not been afraid when he was alone, but it was pleasant to have a friend in the Wood, and when, by and by, the doe got up and started away, he followed close at her heels. Already he had begun to think that she belonged to him and he called to tell her that she should have more honey-cake when they got home.

Every now and then the doe looked back as if to see if he were coming, and once, when he started toward a lake that lay like a bright jewel in the sun, she sprang between him and the water and would not let him pass.

"See, the child has found a forest mother," said the little wild folk who watched them.



HE THOUGHT OF ALL ANIMALS AS PETS. -- Page 73.



"Now perhaps he will live with us." And they began to plan for him.

"He must learn to climb," said a squirrel, "for that is the greatest accomplishment."

"If he lives in the Wood he must know how to leap and to hide, but I shall see to that," said the hare.

"I shall teach him to run," said the fox. "No one can do that so well as I."

But while they talked, the white doe kept steadily on her way. The other wild folk meant well but, after all, it was she who had charge of the child. And, as for little Guy of Godolphin, he did not understand what was being said. All the sounds of the Wood were like one great song to him. He followed the doe wherever she went and thought that he was taking care of her.

The doe did not stop to rest till she came to a dell around which grew five trees: an ashtree, an oak-tree, a hazel-tree, a hawthorn-tree, and a willow with long green branches. A little bird had brought the trees the news of the child who had come into the Wood, and they were well pleased to see him for themselves.

"How small he is!" exclaimed the ash, the tallest tree in the Wood.

"True," said the oak, "but he will grow. I once slept in an acorn, and now look at me."

"He is tall enough to see the nest that I hold," whispered the willow, and she beckoned him to come to her.

"There is no doubt in my mind that he came to the Wood to find flowers for May wreaths," said the hawthorn, that was white with bloom that day, "and the doe has done well in bringing him to me. I have blossoms enough and to spare."

"For my part I shall give him a wand to keep him from harm," said the hazel, who thought herself a magic tree.

Little Guy of Godolphin did not know that the rustling and stirring that he heard was the talking of trees, but it was not long before he found out for himself all that they wished to tell him. And then he began to feel very much at home in the dell.

He gathered flowers from the hawthorn, he spied the nest in the willow's low branches and stood on tiptoe to count the eggs that were in it, and he broke a long switch from the hazel.

"But do not be afraid. I shall not strike you with it," he told the white doe.

The trees nodded and whispered above him.

It was a pity that such a fine child could not live in the Wood forever; that was their opinion.

"He could sleep at night on the moss at my foot," said the oak.

But the white doe soon started on her way again and the child went with her. Before he left, though, he ran to touch each tree.

"Good-bye, good-bye," he said, "I must take my white doe home."

He began to wish that he were at home for he was tired and hungry, too, and his feet lagged and stumbled. Presently a mother bird called out to the doe:

"Can you not see that the little one is sleepy? Make a nest of long grass and tuck him in."

"So do," said an owl from his perch in an oak-tree, "and I will keep watch over him.

You need have no fear, for I never close an eye at night."

But in spite of their kindness the doe went on, though she traveled slowly. A snail could almost have kept up with her, but little Guy of Godolphin still lagged and stumbled. At last he could go no farther. He sat down by the wayside, and when the white doe looked back as if to see why he was so long in coming, he was fast asleep. And it was just then that a great deer came bounding through the Wood.

"The hunters are coming," he cried to the doe. "I have run to warn you till I have no breath left." And he had scarcely spoken when a rook flew down from a tree-top in a great flurry.

"Be off! Be off!" she called, "the hunters

are out. I can see the light of their torches from my watch tower."

All the Wood was in a stir at the news, though there were a few among the wild folk who could not believe it.

"I have lived long and heard much," said the owl, "but never of a hunt on a May Day."

"Nevertheless, the tidings are true," said a rabbit that had just come home to the Wood. "I saw Guy of Godolphin and all the other hunters with my own eyes as I lay hidden in a thicket. They did not pass so much as a bush without stopping to peep into it, but what they were seeking I cannot tell."

"I can and will," said a swallow that was flying through the Enchanted Wood on her way to the chimneys of the king's palace. "I had the whole story from my friend, the swift who builds her nest in the castle chimney. Guy of Godolphin's little son is lost, and the hunters have ridden half a day in search of him. Never was there such sorrow and fear in the castle before."

"Child or no child, May Day or no May Day," said an old fox, "I shall not wait for hunters. The sooner I am hidden away, the safer I shall feel."

"True," said the great deer. "The deep forest is the place for me to-night."

But the white doe had no fear. While the others were talking she kept watch over little Guy of Godolphin and, when they begged her to take heed to herself, she only said:

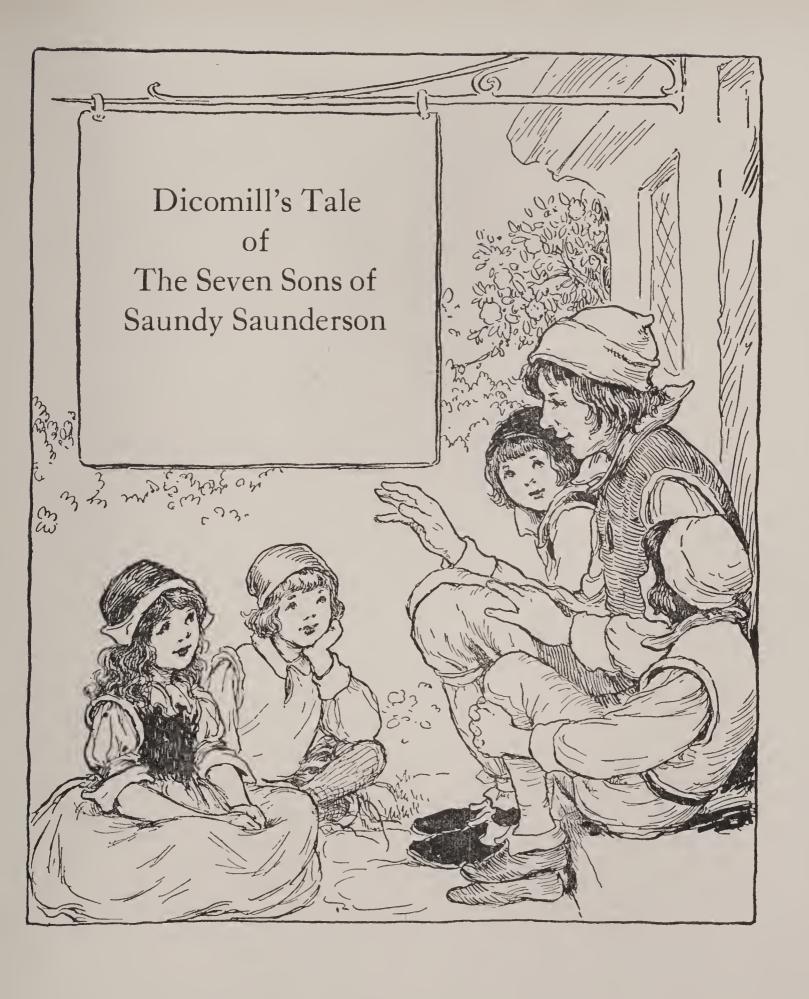
"Have a care, or you will wake the little one."

When Guy of Godolphin and his friends

Enchanted they spied her standing by the road, as still and white as if she were made of marble. And if it had not been for this they might have passed the spot where the child slept without finding him; or so it is thought.

But when little Guy of Godolphin waked up safe and sound in his father's arms and called for his white doe, she could not be found. Nobody ever saw her again.

Yet every year when May Day came round, nothing would do but that little Guy of Godolphin must go to the Wood that is called Enchanted to lay a honey-cake under the oak-tree in the dell. And, as the cake was always gone when he went back next day to see, he was very sure that the white doe had eaten it. "And why not?" asks the story-teller.





THE SEVEN SONS OF SAUNDY SAUNDERSON

AUNDY SAUNDERSON was a worthy man and a thrifty one. He was mindful of his own business, and of the mind to leave the business of others alone, and, because of this, and because he was both honest and cautious, he lived a good life, and made a good end when his time came.

Now Saundy Saunderson had seven son's, and, when he knew that his hour was near, he called them to his side and said:

"It is sure that I can take nothing with me, and 'tis little that I leave behind, but that little lies under the great log in the barnyard, and is for him who moves the log."

And when he had said this, and had bade the sons take care of the cat, and cover the fire each night, he closed his eyes and passed away without another word.

The seven sons mourned for Saundy Saunderson for seven days, but on the eighth day, as they sat beside the fire together, the oldest son said to his brothers:

"Which of us shall first try his luck with the log?" And the others answered:

"Go you, for you are the oldest and it is only fair that you should have first place."

The oldest son of Saundy Saunderson was a strong man. He could lift an ox, as the saying is, and there was not a wrestler to match him in all the countryside.

But strong as he was, and strive as he did, he could not stir the log that lay in the barnyard, so he went in and said to the son nearest him, "Go you, and try."

The second son was a man of skill. If anything went amiss in the village, from the chimes in the church steeple, to an old woman's spinning-wheel, he was the one to set it straight; and as for new ways to do old tasks, he was a wonder.

"He'll move the log if anybody can," said his brothers, but, though he spared neither thought nor pains, his skill failed him and he came to sit by the fire while the third son took his turn.

The third son was a speechful lad. He had twenty words at his tongue's end to any other man's one, and no matter what was talked about, a shower or a stranger, a stray dog or a pastry cook, he was sure to have more to say than anybody else. But talk has never yet moved a log, and the lad was soon back emptyhanded, and as cross as six sticks.

"'T is a sorry, ill-seasoned, stubborn log, too tough to cut, too green to burn, too heavy to lift. There's better fortune in sitting still and saving breath," said he. But, nevertheless, the fourth son rose in his time.

The fourth son of Saundy Saunderson was a silent soul, but whether he was still because he lacked the sense to speak, or whether he held his peace because he was wiser then most folk, it would be hard to tell. But this is so: when he had gone into the yard, and walked around the log twice or thrice, he came to his seat beside the fire without a word.

The next two sons of Saundy Saunderson were sturdy, stalwart lads. They were always ready to follow and serve in any good cause, but if either one had ever started as much as a tune by himself, his own brothers did not know it. So, though they got up in turn and went into the yard, nobody was surprised when they came back shaking their heads with sheepish looks.

Now, all the time the other sons had been making trial with the log that hid their father's fortune, the youngest son of Saundy Saunderson had sat by the fire studying. He was the seventh son of a seventh son, and as shrewd as an old wife, but he was a small lad, slim as a young birch-tree.

Said he: "'T is plain to see that I can move no log, but, while I have been sitting here beside the fire, I've thought that what one cannot do alone, seven may do. What say you, shall we move the log together and share the fortune?"

The others were well pleased with what he said.

"Who knows but that it was just such a thing our father had in mind? The log will stand no chance against seven, that is sure," said the third son, and he would have said more had it not been that his brothers were too busy to listen.

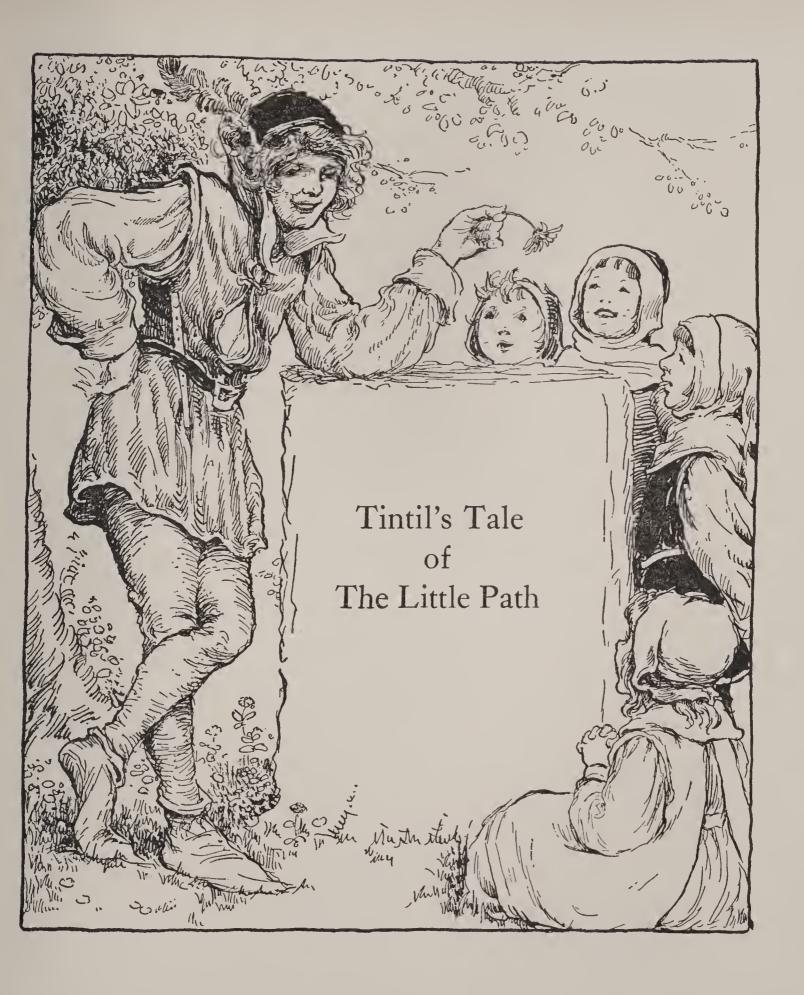
The skilful son made all the plans and gave to every one his place and part. The strongest stood at the heaviest end of the log and the slim lad at the lightest. The third son had a chance to use his tongue as well as his hands for he was the one who gave command:

"One, to make ready; Two, stand ye steady; Three, for a cheer-O; Four, here we go."

Up came the log and there lay seven shillings which was all the fortune that Saundy Saunderson had saved.

Yet, though they got but a shilling apiece, the seven sons prospered from that very day. And, if they are not dead, they are living still.







THE LITTLE PATH

HERE was once a little maid who very often went from her home on one side of the Wood that is called Enchanted to her aunt's house on the other side.

She went so often by the same road that there was not a tree, nor a bush, nor a stick, nor a stone, nor anything else along the way that she did not know. At least so she thought until one day when she spied a tiny path in the Wood that she had never seen before.

It was the smallest path that can be imagined, scarcely wider than my two hands put side by side; and, if it had been scrubbed with

soapstone, it would not have been whiter. There was something about it, too, that made it different from other paths, or so the little maid thought. No sooner had she laid eyes on it, than she wished, above all things, to follow it and find out where it went.

Such a tiny path would not be a very long one, she thought. Surely she would have time to go to the end of it and get to her auntie's house, too, before the sun went down.

But the little path was not short and neither was it straight, as the little maid soon found out.

Twist and turn,
Twist and turn,
Through moss,
Through fern,
Climbing hills,

Leaping rills,
Creeping under tangled vines,
Ivy stems, woodbines,
In sun, in shade,
Hollows brown,
Green glade,
Twist and turn,
Twist and turn,
Through moss,
Through fern—

That is the way the little path went and wherever it went the little maid followed it. If she said to herself, "Perhaps I had better turn back at the blackthorn," or "I'll only peep beyond the thicket there," she was sure to see something that made the little maid eager to go farther.

On either side of the little path grew flowers:

Bluebell,
Speedwell,
Columbine,
Wild Thyme,
Muskmallow,
Golden Sallow,
Lady's Smock,
Charlock,
Sundew,
Meadow Rue,
Gold of Pleasure
Without measure,—

All these grew by the path and, if there had been time, nothing would have pleased the little maid more than to have gathered her hands full of posies.

"But I'll come back to-morrow morning and bring a basket," she said to herself as she hurried on.

At first she had thought that she was all alone on the little path, but by and by she saw that she had company in plenty.

First there went a spotted toad,
Then Snailie with his load,
Lizard with a crimson tie,
Brown-and-yellow butterfly,
Bumblebee in golden vest,
Moth in softest velvet drest,
Humming-bird with ruby throat,
Lady-bug in gay red coat.

Hopping, creeping, or flying, all of them traveled the very same way that she was going.

"There must be something at the end of the little path, or so many would not follow it," said the little maid; but every time she thought she had reached the end, off the path would go in another direction:

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Twist and turn,
Twist and turn,
Through moss,
Through fern—

Then, just when she was least expecting it, she came to a tiny dell among the trees where there were no paths at all.

The little maid looked about to see why the little path had led to such a lonely faraway spot. A holly-tree grew there, but who would walk a mile and more to find a holly-tree when the Wood was full of them? There was sweet fern, too, almost a hedge of it, but that was nothing to bring a little maid, or any-body else, out of her way. And there were three flat stones lying close together in the grass.

"But what are three flat stones but three flat stones?" thought the little maid, and she was just turning to go when she spied something that set her heart to beating fast:

Twenty little toad stools growing in a ring around the greenest grass that ever was—

"A fairy ring! A fairy ring!" cried the little maid, for her aunt had told her all about such things.

A fairy ring where fairies danced at night, yes, and was not the holly a gentle tree such as fairies loved? And ferns bore magic seed; she had heard that a hundred times. And the three flat stones were exactly like wishing-stones now that she had looked at them again.

Why, the little path had led to fairyland! There was not a doubt about it; or so the little maid thought.

"I must run this very minute and tell everybody," said she. There was her aunt and wee lame Jem who so loved fairy tales, and oh, many another child! If she made haste they might come to see the fairies dance that very night. Think of it! Fairies dancing right before one's eyes, maybe! And perhaps her auntie would bake tiny cakes cut out with a gold thimble to lay on the grass for the little Good People. If only there were time!

But it was late. The sun was already low, and shining like a great red coal through the trees.

"It will soon drop behind my auntie's house," said the little maid aloud, and she had not finished her words before she started through the Wood toward the setting sun. She ran so fast that she never could tell the way she went.



"A FAIRY RING! A FAIRY RING!"—Page 101.



She did not even stop to draw a breath till she spied her auntie standing in the doorway of her house.

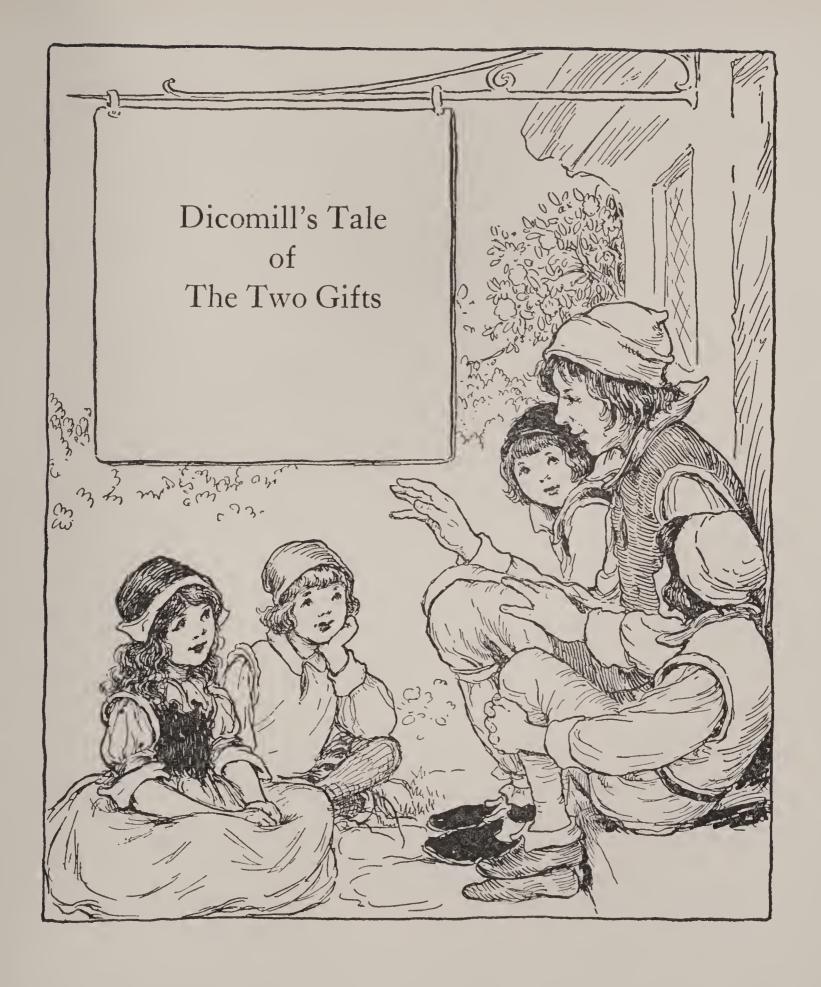
"Where have you been, dear child?" called the aunt, for the sun had set, and it was high time for little maids to be at home.

"In fairyland, in fairyland," called the little maid, "and you can go there, too. I will show you the little path."

But, do you believe it, when they went together to the Enchanted Wood they could not find the little path! It was just as if somebody had picked it up and carried it away.

The little maid and all the other children are still looking for it, and if they ever find it you shall hear of it. I promise you that by the new moon over my right shoulder.







THE TWO GIFTS

OHN-WILL had two godfathers for whom he was named and, when he was old enough to try his fortune away from home, he went to ask their blessings and to bid them good-bye.

Godfather Will was a man of property and fashion, too. He had more windows in his house than anybody else in the town. His money-bags were filled to overflowing, or so it was told, and when he went to take the air he carried a gold-headed cane in his hand. So you can see for yourself what he was like.

He had been so busy with money-making and merry-making that he had almost forgotten that he had a godson, but when he had looked at him twice and had asked his name he recalled the very day that the lad was christened. It was hard for him to believe, though, that the baby he remembered had grown up into such a fine young man.

"You must have a gift to take with you," said he, and he brought out a purse, almost as long as a man's sock, full of money, golden guineas, and crowns, and half-crowns.

"Spend freely," said he, as he gave the purse to the lad, "for you will be young but once."

John-Will was well pleased with such a gift, you may be sure, and what with looking at the coins and thanking his godfather, he forgot all about the blessing for which he had come to ask.

He was still rejoicing in his good fortune

when he came to the other godfather's house.

The second godfather was neither very rich nor very poor, but he was busy from morning till night, for he had a garden that was the delight of his eyes; and a very fine garden it was.

He was out at work in it when John-Will came up, but no sooner had he spied the lad than he dropped his spade and hurried to meet him.

"It seems only yesterday that I was at your christening," he said, wiping away a tear as he spoke. "What a baby you were! 'Tis no wonder that you have grown to be such a fine, strong fellow. And here you are starting out for yourself," said he.

"Yes, Godfather John, and I have come to bid you good-bye and ask your blessing," said John-Will, for now that he had a fortune in his pocket he was eager to be off.

But Godfather John had a gift for him, too: a bag of grain from his seed-house.

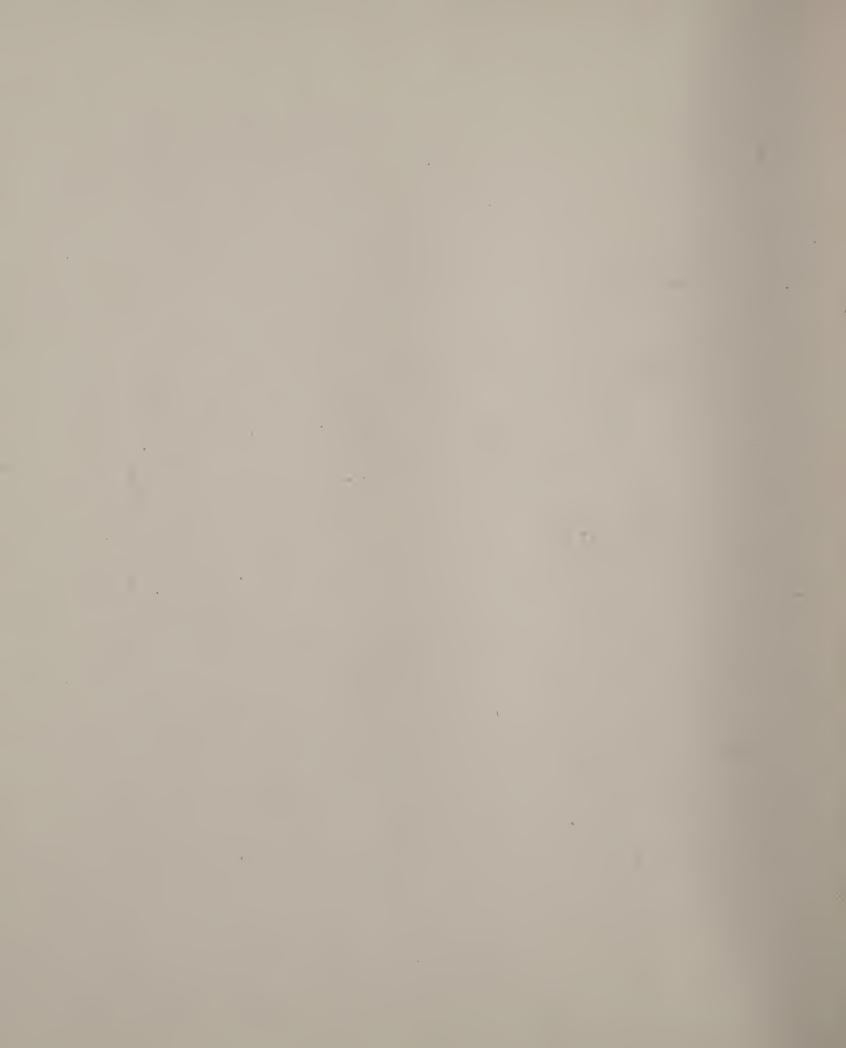
"And a blessing goes with it," said he as he put it into the lad's hand.

John-Will loved his godfather and thanked him for his gift, but in his heart he wished that he could leave it behind. The bag was both heavy and clumsy, an ill-looking burden for a young man to carry, especially for one who had money to spend. Nevertheless he shouldered the bag and marched away with as good a grace as he could manage.

He was scarcely out of sight, though, when he began to look about for a place where he might get rid of the gift, and finding an open space apart from the road he scattered the



"AND A BLESSING GOES WITH IT."-Page 110.



grain on the earth with a lavish hand and came away.

"Now I shall begin to enjoy myself," said he, and he hailed a coach that went by just then and got in, for a rain was threatening, and, besides, he was glad of a chance to show how rich he was. O-ho, it was grand to ride in a coach with the rain pattering overhead!

When he came to an inn, as come he did, he bade the innkeeper show him the best room, and for supper he had roast duck and raspberry jam and apple tart and all the other good things of which you can think.

The innkeeper and the innkeeper's wife and all the servants, besides, were eager to wait on him, and it was soon whispered about that he was a very great man, though in disguise.

To tell the truth, the clothes that he wore

were not those that a man with a purse of money should have, and John-Will soon found this out. Then off he went to the tailor's shop where he bought a velvet suit that fitted him as well as if he had been poured into it.

"If only you had a brooch to fasten your coat, the young laird himself would not make a better appearance," said the tailor.

"Then I must have a brooch," said John-Will and, as the tailor kindly pointed out the goldsmith's shop, the lad lost no time in laying out more money there.

Every day went as merrily as a silver bell with a golden clapper. As long as Godfather Will's gift lasted, nobody was so gay and proud as John-Will.

But there came a morning when, looking into the purse, he saw nothing but the bottom

of it, and then the world took on a different color.

Still the lad was not too much disheartened. Fine clothes that cost money would bring money he thought, and so they did, though not half as much as he had paid for them.

He sold first one thing and then another to keep alive, till at last he found himself with nothing but the clothes that he had worn when he began his travels. There was a penny in the coat pocket, and, seeing nothing better to be done with it, he bought a loaf of bread and made up his mind to go home.

It was a long way and a weary way that he had to go, and when at last he came near his own town, which was the town of Wraye, he was so covered with dust from the coaches that had passed him that he turned aside from the

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road and followed a by-path for fear he might meet some one who knew him.

He was trudging along with a heavy heart when, all at once, he spied ahead of him something bright and yellow that waved in the wind. And, when he had gone nearer, what should he see in the very spot where he had thrown away the grain but a patch of ripened wheat all ready for the harvesting.

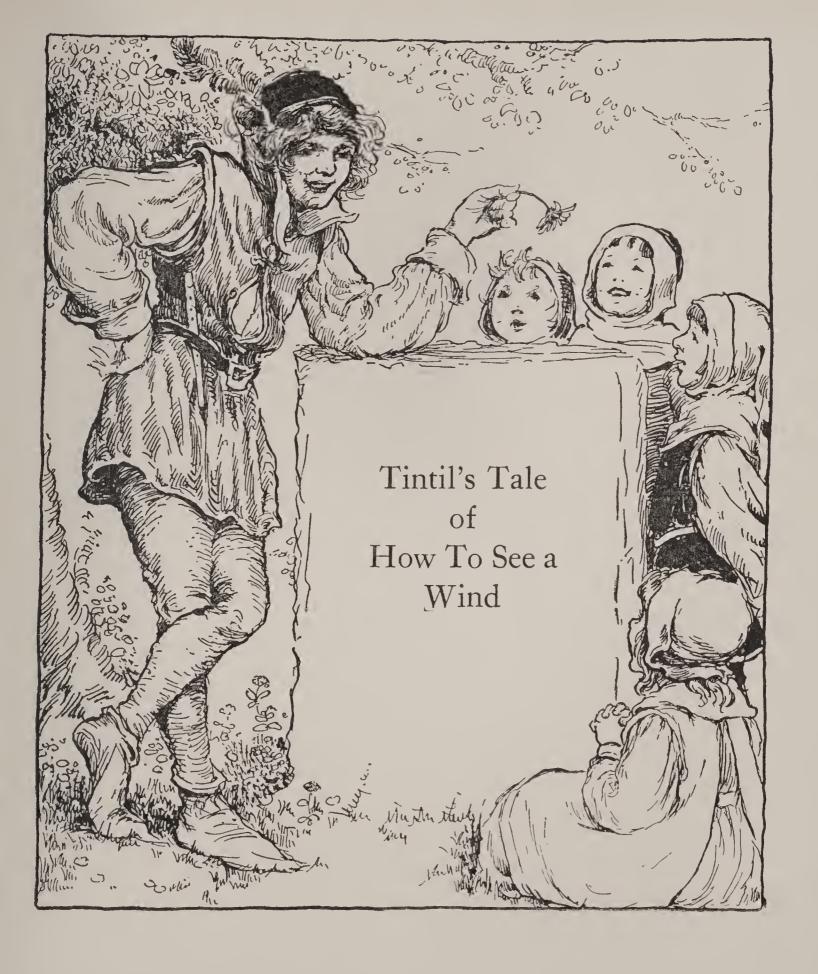
The same rain that had pattered on the roof of the coach where he had ridden so proud and gay, had beaten the grain into the earth. And while he had been at his money-spending and merry-making it had taken root and grown till now it was as bright as gold in the sunshine.

"Oh, what a fine gift my Godfather John gave me!" cried John-Will, and, forgetting all his troubles, he ran to the town to find reapers.

Some of the wheat was sold to the miller of Wraye, and some laid away to plant in the spring. And what with golden harvests from every planting and seed to plant from every harvest, Godfather John's gift is lasting yet.*

*After the story was finished Dicomill said to the children: "It is true enough that wheat sometimes falls into the earth and grows and bears harvest without more care than that which the sun and the rain give, but such a thing does not happen often. John-Will had to work hard for his other golden harvests, you may be sure of that."







HOW TO SEE A WIND

HERE was once a child who wished above all things to see a wind. He lived with his grandmother in a tiny hut just across the road from the Wood that is called Enchanted, and this may have been one of the reasons that he had such a wish. It was said that winds lived in this Wood, and whether this were true or not, the child liked to believe it.

Then his grandmother talked a great deal about winds. If she had a twinge of rheumatism, she was sure to think that the East Wind was to blame for it. Or, sometimes as the child

lay on his little pallet-bed, she would bring an extra quilt to wrap about him.

"The North Wind has come and we shall have a cold night," she would say, and then the child would hear a great noise outside like the galloping of a horse; or so it sounded to him.

Another time, when he wanted to leave his supper to see who was passing by, his grandmother said: "Oh, it is only the South Wind among the leaves and flowers."

And it was from her that he learned this rhyme:

"When the wind is in the West, It is at its very best." *

Yet if he asked: "Grandmother, how does the South Wind look?" or "What is the West Wind like?" she would always answer:

^{*} Old weather rhyme.

"Tut, tut, child, nobody has ever seen the wind."

All this made him eager to have his wish, but there was still another reason. He was born in March, which every one knows is the month of winds, and once, on his birthday, a wandering minstrel stopped to rest at the little house. He was a gay young minstrel and when he learned that it was the child's birthday, he said:

"Well, well, it takes a March child to catch the wind."

The child was all interest when he heard that.

"What would I do with it if I caught it?" he asked.

"Why, ride on its back, to be sure," said the minstrel, but the child wished to know still more.

"Where would I go?" said he.

"Oh, above the steeples and above the treetops to drive the cloud-sheep home," answered the minstrel and he went away laughing, though the child had another question, a very important one, to ask: how could he catch what he could not see?

Still he had great hopes of doing both these things. Somebody had to be the first to see or do anything, his grandmother had often told him that. So, sometimes, he would lie as quiet as the earth itself, and wait and watch for a wind to come; or, sometimes, when the leaves and grasses began to stir in a breeze he would jump from behind a tree or run around the corner of the house with his arms wide-spread. But, though he felt the wind and heard it all about him, he saw nothing.

Then one night he waked up suddenly with a new plan in his head. He would go to the Enchanted Wood to catch a wind. And "Why wait until morning?" he thought. The moon was shining as bright as day, and he was very wide awake. It was true that his grandmother was asleep, and so could not hear of what he intended to do, but it would be a fine thing to surprise her with the great news if he could carry out his purpose. So, making no more noise than a butterfly, he slipped out of bed and tiptoed to the door. He did not even take time to dress. The very next minute he was running across the moonlighted road, and into the Enchanted Wood.

Almost every day he played in the Wood, but nothing looked the same to him that night. It seemed as if the moon had changed every

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thing to silver. The leaves and the tree-trunks, the long trailing vines, and the little stream of water that ran through the mosses were all shining in the light; and everything was quiet. He still tiptoed to keep from making any noise himself.

He knew just where he wanted to go. If the winds lived in the Enchanted Wood, their home was sure to be near the aspen-tree, which was never still. When he came in sight of it that night, its branches and leaves were quivering ever so gently, though nothing else seemed to stir at all. His heart began to beat very fast. Surely this was the place where his wish would come true.

He sat down at the foot of the tree, and waited, and watched, and watched, and waited, till his eyes were too tired to stay open an-

other moment. He had to close them, which was a very fortunate thing, as you shall hear. No sooner were they shut tight than he saw coming out of the bushes before him, four great horses, the most beautiful that can be imagined.

One was as white and glistening as frozen snow, with a mane that looked as if it were of spun silver. Its tail was silvery, too, and its hoofs were the brightest silver of all. They sparkled and shone like the Northern Lights, as the great horse pranced and danced.

"Why, that is the North Wind," said the child just as he might have said "Oh, that is my tabby cat," or "Here is the brindled calf." It seemed to him then as if he had always known how the North Wind looked.

The second horse was the very color of sun-

light. The whole Wood was lighted up with the glow of its long golden mane, and its bright golden hoofs; and its breath was as warm as a flame of fire.

"Oh, how beautiful the South Wind is!" said the child, and he was not surprised at what he said. Why, of course it was the South Wind!

And he knew that the next horse, which was as grey as the morning mists, with starry eyes, and a star on its forehead, was the Wind from the East; though he could not believe that such a wonderful creature had anything to do with his grandmother's rheumatism. He must tell her that she was wrong.

The last horse was a roan with a satiny coat and glossy mane, red as the reddest sunset. This was the West Wind, nobody could be mistaken about that.

"My grandmother likes the West Wind best of all, so perhaps I'd better catch that one," said the child, and he was just reaching out his hand to take hold of the red roan's mane when he heard some one calling, and calling:

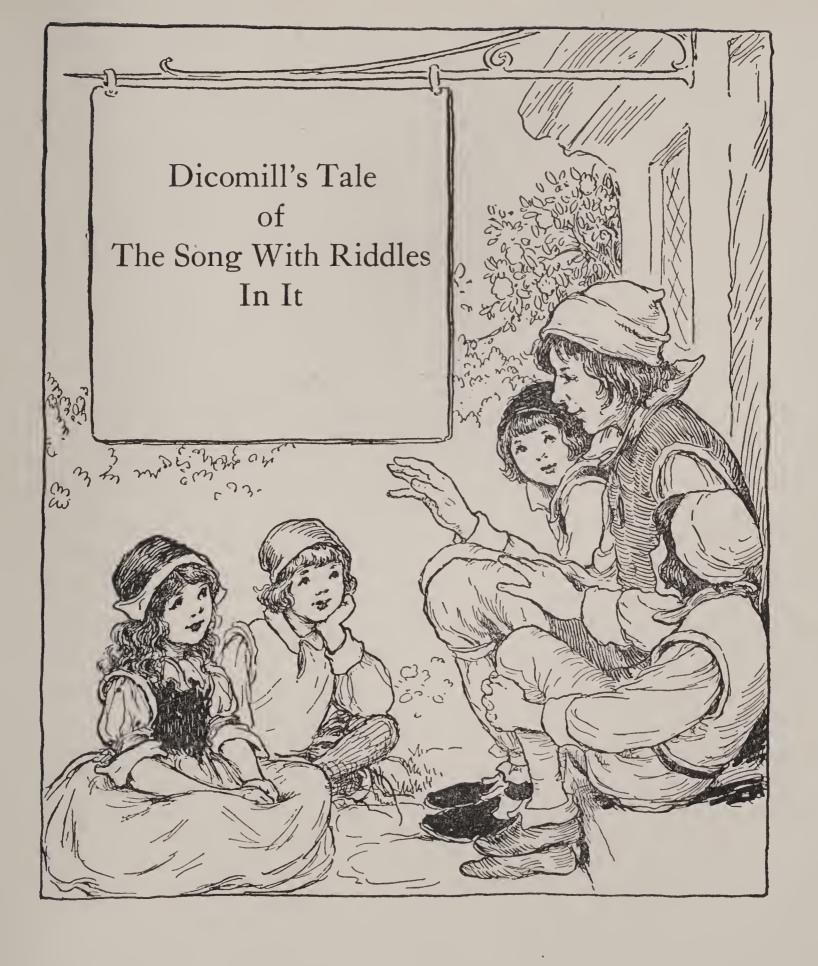
"Laddie, laddie, where are you? Come home."

"Just as soon as I have caught a wind," he answered, opening his eyes as he spoke. And, do you believe it? the winds were nowhere to be seen.

There are some people who say that he did not see them at all. "How could he see them unless his eyes were open?" they ask.

But there are others who have a different opinion. They believe that the child discovered the only way to see a wind; which is, they say, with your eyes shut.







THE SONG WITH RIDDLES IN IT

HERE was once upon a time a Long Song-Seller who went about London Town with all his wares fastened upon a pole and fluttering in every breeze that blew.

He had songs about everything under the sun. Merry songs, sad songs, songs for Sunday and songs for Monday, or any other day, and all at the lowest price that you could wish.

"Three yards for a penny; Songs! Beautiful songs," called the Long Song-Seller, for that was the way he sold them. If any one stopped to buy, the songs were measured off just as if they were made of fine linen or bright silk, in-

stead of fine words and lovely rhymes printed on paper.

On most days when the weather was fair, the song-peddler had good fortune, for there are many who love a song. But one day the only customer he had was the wind. And never a penny the wind had to pay.

The Long Song-Seller could not get away from the wind. At every corner it was waiting for him, and, before the poor peddler could find a shelter, his yards of beautiful songs were tattered and torn and blown here and there, hither and thither.

What became of them all, nobody knows, but one strip of paper with a gay little song printed on it, blew away by itself, through the streets and lanes of London Town, and out into a country road.

All the way the wind was chasing, and whirling, and twirling, and twirling, and twisting it until it was torn into a dozen pieces, which flew here and there, hither and thither. Some of them were caught on this, and some were trapped by that till, at last, there was only one scrap of paper left traveling on the road.

The wind hunted it into corners, tossed it up to the tree-tops and down again, and landed it at the feet of a lad who was standing by the roadside, singing to himself, and longing for a new song, if the truth be told. There was nobody in London Town, nor in all the world, who loved a song more than he did.

When he first spied the scrap of paper, he had no thought of picking it up, but, just as he was turning away to go home, he caught sight of the printing on it. And he was not a

lad who would ever let a chance for reading go by.

Before the wind, which was rising for sport again, had time to snatch away the paper, the lad had it fast in his hand, and was poring over the words that were on it:

"There were three lassies as I've heard tell, Hey, hey, nonny! Who went to market their wares to sell! Hey, bonny lassies!

"The first brought gold in-"

Here the scrap of paper ended, but not the lad's interest. He was all eagerness to know more about the lassies and what they had to sell, and what the gold was brought to market in.

"It's likely to have been a bag," he said to

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himself, but that was only guessing and how to find out the truth of it he could not tell.

One thing was certain, though: the wind had brought the scrap of paper from somewhere, and other scraps that held just what he longed to know might be scattered along the road.

"I must keep my eyes open," thought he, and he did. Everywhere he went, with the cows to pasture, or corn to the mill, up the road, and down, he looked for the end of the song. The very next afternoon, as he was coming from the field, he spied a bit of paper lying in a dry ditch, and when he had picked it up, it fitted with the first scrap as neatly as if the two had never been torn apart, and the words fitted, too. The lad began at the beginning and read the song as proudly as if he had made it himself:

"There were three lassies as I've heard tell, Hey, hey nonny! Who went to market their wares to sell! Hey, bonny lassies!

"The first brought gold in a casket white, Hey, hey, nonny! The next had a comb all amber bright, Hey, bonny lassies!

"A silvery ball in a silky coat,"

(Hey, hey, nonny!)

"I'll sell," laughed the last lass, "for a groat,"

Hey, bonny lassies!

"There came a robber, oh, bold and gay! Hey, hey——"

"Shame on him," cried the lad. "If I had been near enough I'd have sent him away with

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a broken head"; but if there had been any brave lad to come to the rescue of the lassies, he could not know, for there was no more of the song on the paper.

Still the lad had high hopes of finding the end of it.

"In old wives' tales everything happens three times, and why not in real life as well?" he said; and what should he see not long after this, but a bird flying by with a long strip of paper in its bill.

"Stop, stop!" cried the lad, but the bird only flew the faster. The paper might have been lost forever if it had not caught in a bramble bush and hung there. The lad was so eager to see if there was more of the song on it that he could scarcely untangle it. But when he had gotten it free he had pay for his trouble, for though

the paper was dirty and discolored enough to have discouraged anybody else, the lad studied it until he made out every word that was printed there. Sure enough it told of the robber so bold and gay:

"Who robbed the lassies that morn of May, Hey, hey, nonny!

"He broke the casket and swallowed the gold, Hey, hey, nonny! The comb he gobbled, this robber bold, Hey, bonny lassies!

"The silvery ball he was fain to try,
Hey, hey, nonny!
He sliced it up and began to cry,
Hey, bonny lassies!

"The tears they ran from his eyes like rain,

Hey, hey, nonny!

"Ho," laughed the last lassie, "try it again."

Here the paper ended leaving the lad sorely puzzled. Swallowed the gold? Gobbled a comb? Sliced a silvery ball and began to cry? What could the song mean?

"There are riddles in it," he said to himself, "and where there are riddles, there must be answers."

Where to find the answers he did not know, but he kept his eyes wide open. When he went into the village next Saturday to buy a bun and spied a bit of paper pasted on the shop window, he fairly ran to see if there was anything to read on it. And do you believe it? he found these very words:

"There were three lassies as you've heard tell, Hey, hey, nonny!

But what were the wares they had to sell? Hey, bonny lassies!

"The casket white with its store of gold.

Hey, hey, nonny,

Was nought——"

"They are riddles," shouted the lad and he ran into the shop so fast to ask where the paper had come from, that he stumbled over a cat, and upset a basket of apples. The shopkeeper had a mind not to answer his question at all, and when at last he coaxed her into a good humor, all that he learned was this: the wind had blown the scrap of paper to her door and she had pasted it across a crack in the window-pane!

The lad put the riddles to every one he met. What gold that lay in a casket white might be

THE SONG WITH RIDDLES 141

swallowed? What amber comb could be gobbled up? What silvery ball in a silky coat could make the robber who sliced it cry?

He asked his grandmother and all the rest of his kinspeople. He asked the mayor and he asked the beadle. He asked the parson and he asked the clerk, and when none of them had answers for him he started out to London Town.

"For there are more people to ask there than here," said he.

It was early in the morning when he got to London Town and, as fortune would have it, the first man he met was the Long Song-Seller crying his wares:

"Three yards for a penny! Songs! Beautiful songs!"

"Have you any with riddles in them?" asked

the lad, for he had a penny in his pocket to spend.

"The finest ever printed," said the peddler.

"The king himself could not guess the riddles unless he already knew the answers." And what should he do but pull out from his songs the very one that told the whole story of the lassies and their wares. And this is what the laddie read:

"The casket white with its store of gold,
Hey, hey, nonny!
Was naught but an egg so I've been told,
Hey, bonny lassies!

"A honey-comb is all amber bright,
Hey, hey, nonny!
Who would not gobble it with delight?
Hey, bonny lassies!



THE VERY ONE THAT TOLD THE WHOLE STORY. - Page 142.



SONG WITH RIDDLES IN IT 143

"And what but an onion scarce worth a groat,
Hey, hey, nonny!
Was the silvery ball in its silky coat,
Hey, bonny lassies!"

The lad was as pleased as if he had found hidden treasure, and so was the peddler when he had heard all that I have told you, and pocketed his penny.

"'T is an ill wind that blows nobody good," said he; and that saying is old enough to be true.







THE CHRISTMAS WITCH

NCE upon a time there was a little old woman who lived in a village close by the Wood that is called Enchanted. She lived all alone, and she lived to herself, for though she was friendly to others, others were not friendly to her. And all because of something that she did year by year as surely as Christmas Day came round.

On Christmas Day there was singing of carols and ringing of bells in the village, and gathering of friends and playing of games, but the little old woman took part in none of these. Instead she put on her cloak and hood (and never was there a redder cloak and hood!)

and with a long leather bag in her hand she went away into the Enchanted Wood. Nobody knew what she did there, and for that very reason everybody was sure that what she did was wrong.

"A witch could not have queerer ways than hers," said one busybody, and what she said was told from one to another till at last there was not a person in the village who did not believe that the little old woman was a witch. At least if there was any one who did not agree with the rest he kept his opinion to himself.

As soon as people got into the way of believing that the little old woman was a witch, they were always finding something to prove that they were right.

A man, who was hurrying home to eat his Christmas dinner, saw two ravens as black as "They are going to meet the old witch," he said; and when he got home and told what he had seen there was a great nodding of heads and whispering among those who heard him. Ravens were witches' friends, there was no doubt of it.

Then a little boy who peeped in her window saw the little old woman putting bread-crusts, and crumbs, and a handful of wheat in her long leather bag; and when he told his mother, she said:

"That is to thicken the broth that witches make."

But the greatest proof that the little old woman was up to mischief was that she would never answer a word about how she spent her Christmas days, though more than one person asked her. Even when her nearest neighbor said, "Is it to visit the sick that you go?" she hurried on without a word.

It was no wonder, or at least so it was said, that the children soon learned to run by her house as if a bogie were after them; or that the grown people had nothing but cold words and looks for the little old woman. Every year that passed she was left more and more to herself, and every Christmas there was more and more talk when, dressed in her crimson cloak and hood, she went with her bag to the Wood.

There is no telling what might have happened in the end if it had not been that, on one Christmas morning, a child, who was forever thinking and talking of magic things, set out to follow her.

No matter if the grown people had warned the children to keep away from the Enchanted Wood on Christmas Day, or what they had said witches might do to any one who interfered with them, he was determined to see what he could see; so when the little old woman started on her Christmas journey he went as close behind her as he dared. On the way he met a playmate who wanted to know where he was going.

"Oh, just to see the little old woman eat her Christmas dinner with all the other witches," said the child; and nothing would do but that the playmate must go with him.

By and by a girl, who was going Christmasvisiting with a basket of cakes on her arm, spied them stepping along so quietly and mysteriously, and as she was as curious as anybody, she went out of her way to ask what they were doing.

"Why," said she when she heard, "there is nothing that I should like so much to see as witches at their Christmas dinner. I must go, too"; and go she did, cakes and all.

Other children came running to join them, and it was not long before older people began to notice them and to ask, "Whither away?" or, "Why so quiet on a Christmas Day?"

"Because we are going to see the little old woman eat her Christmas dinner with all the other witches in the Enchanted Wood," answered the first child, and no sooner had they heard this than the older people were as eager to go as anybody.

Soon the idea spread that to follow the little old woman and find out what she did was not

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only the right thing to do, but that it should have been done long ago.

"Why have we never thought of it before?" said everybody.

By the time the Enchanted Wood was reached a crowd of people, some very young and some old, some very timid and some who thought themselves as brave as lions, were following the little old woman; but they went so quietly that she did not dream that they were there. She kept steadily on her way down the road, and through the Wood till she came to a clear place where the ground rose into a little hill. Then just as the people, who were scattered among the trees to watch, began to wonder what she would do next, she gave a call that was as much like the call of a bird as if she had been one herself.

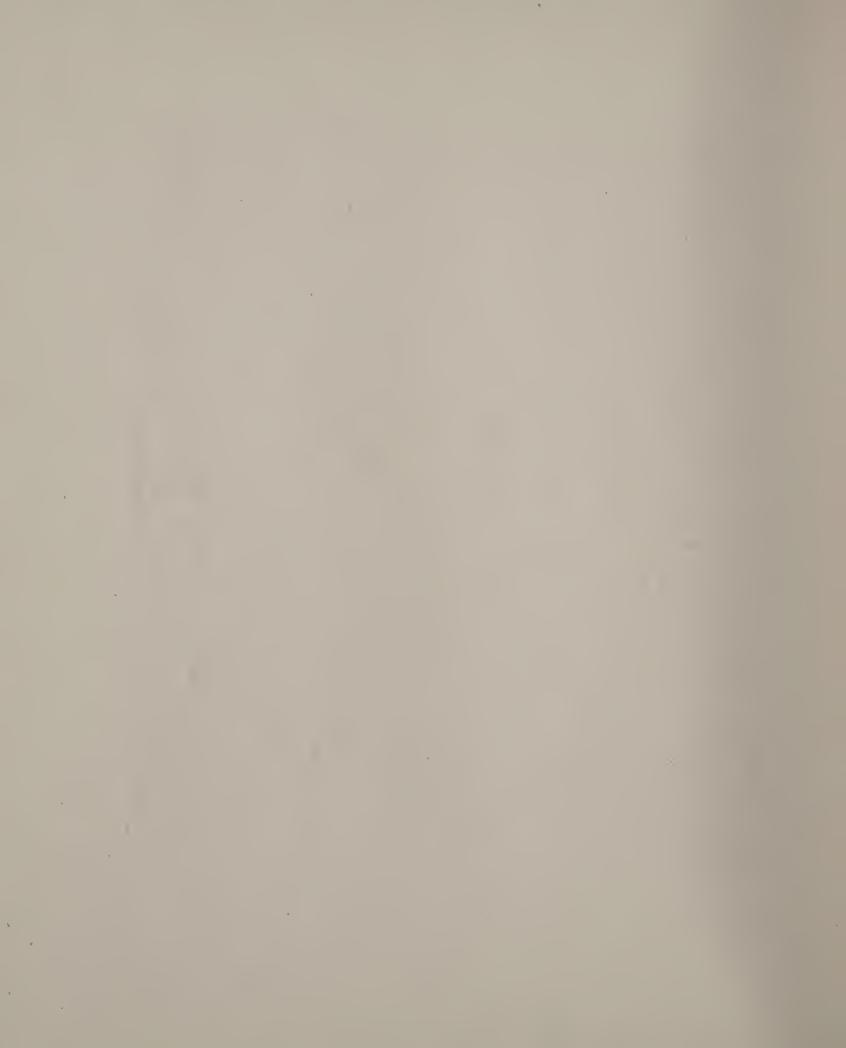
And, all at once, the watchers heard a stir and a whir all through the Wood.

"The witches are coming," whispered some one and the bravest in the crowd quailed at the thought. It is even said that some people closed their eyes from fear.

But when they took courage to look again the hill was covered, not with witches but with birds; redcaps, linnets, throstles, mavises, and every other bird that you might name; and all of them chirping and calling and singing—oh, never was there sweeter Christmas music than the birds made that day! And in the midst of them stood the little old woman throwing out the crumbs and grain that she had brought for their Christmas dinner. Her crimson hood had fallen from her head and a tiny brown bird had lighted there. A robin sat on her



NEVER WAS THERE SWEETER CHRISTMAS MUSIC THAN THE BIRDS MADE THAT DAY! — Page 154.



shoulder and a swallow fed from her hand.

The village people could scarcely believe their eyes, and only the child who had led them to the Wood had anything to say as they slipped away home.

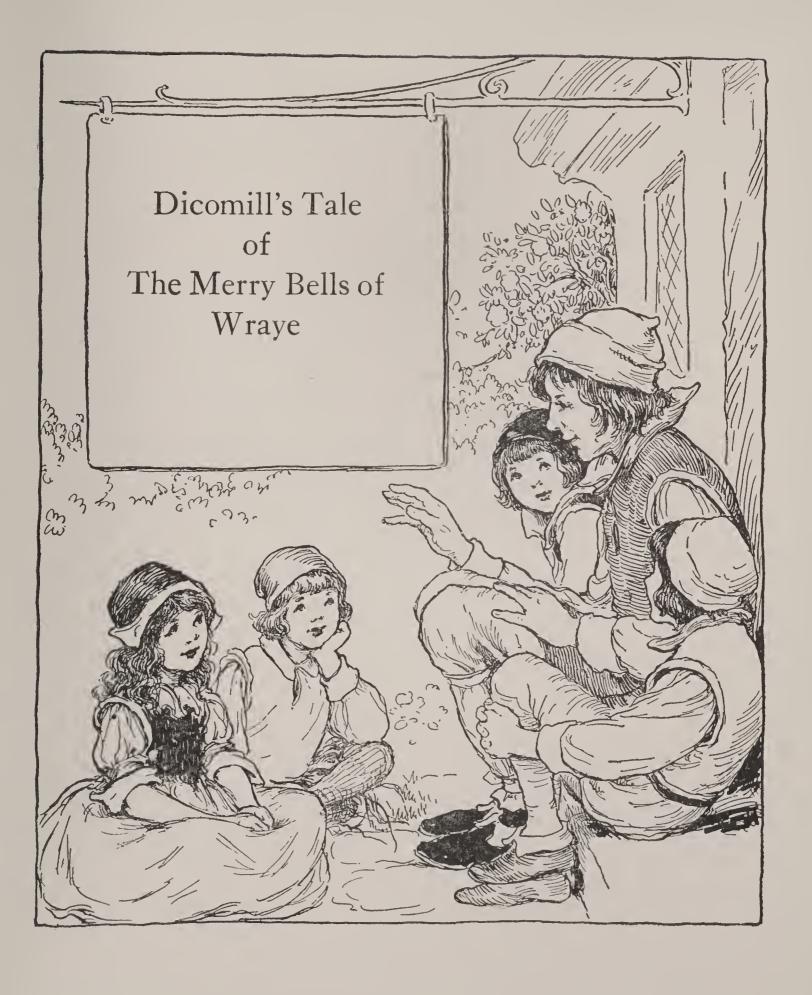
"I wish that the Christmas Witch would let me help her feed the birds," said he, and that is how the little old woman got the name that she was called ever after.

Never a word did she hear of what had been done that Christmas Day, but all at once people grew so friendly and kind that often when she went to bed at night she lay awake to wonder at it. Why, somebody was always running in to wish her "good-day" or to tell her pleasant news.

And that was not all, for on the next Christmas day when, dressed in her crimson cloak and hood and carrying her bag of crumbs and grain, she came to the little hill in the Wood, there lay a great sack of wheat with a message on it: "For the Birds' Christmas Dinner."

Oh, there was joy that day in the Wood that is called Enchanted. Redcaps, linnets, throstles, mavises, and all the other birds that you can name were there, chirping and calling and singing till the Wood was filled with the music they made. The little old woman laughed to hear it, and so did her friends and neighbors back in the shadows of the trees, for they had followed her again to watch the feast.

"What a fine thing it is," they whispered, "to have a Christmas Witch in our town."





THE MERRY BELLS OF WRAYE

HERE was once a lad who went roving. He was born and brought up in the town of Wraye, which everybody knows is a good town, and why he was not satisfied to stay there it would be hard to tell. But nothing would satisfy Roger, for that was his name, but going to sea. So to sea he went, and there were people in plenty who said that he would never come back. But his mother was not one of these.

"The sea is a wide pasture, and Roger is a young colt," she said; "but never is a long time, and home is a grand place to go when you are away from it," said she.

Sure enough, on a Christmas eve when nobody was expecting him, Roger the rover came home. The good people of Wraye were asleep in their beds, dreaming of Christmas puddings, and sugar plums, and who knows what besides. Not even a dog was awake to bark a welcome to the laddie. And all dogs liked Roger.

It seemed no longer than yesterday to him that he had gone away to seek his fortune with little more than bread and cheese in his pockets, but he had seen strange sights and strange places since that day. The school-master of Wraye, though he knew more than most folk, had never even heard of some of the places where Roger had been.

As for the fortune, why, the lad's pockets would not hold all the shillings he had saved

to bring to his mother. He had to tie some of them up in his handkerchief. Oh, yes, he had done well for himself.

But though he had sailed so far and seen so much, Roger was glad to get home, and glad to see by the light of the moon that nothing was changed in the town of Wraye. The wooden sign at the inn door was creaking in the wind, just as it had creaked since the day it was hung there. Dame Trot, who kept the village shop, still had gingerbread alphabets in her window to tempt little learners; the town pump's broken nose had never been mended, and the parson's gate stood open as it always had done, so that any one who wished might go in without any trouble.

"Yes, it is good to be at home again," thought Roger, and he would have gone quietly to his mother's house had it not been that, just then, his eyes fell upon the church tower, that was overgrown with the greenest ivy in the world, or so he thought.

Up in the church tower hung the bells which the sexton rang on Sabbath days, and Christmas, and all great occasions. Roger himself had rung them once when the sexton's back was turned.

> Ding-a-ding-dong Ding-a-dong-dell!

He remembered yet how merry they had sounded.

"If I could get my hands on the ropes I would ring the bells to-night for the fun of it," said Roger. "It would make a pretty stir or I'm no sailor." And no sooner had he thought of

MERRY BELLS OF WRAYE 163 such a prank than he began to look about for a way to carry it out.

The great door of the church was locked, and the big iron key was under the sexton's pillow; Roger knew that very well.

"But what is the need of a key when the belfry window is open wide?" he asked himself. "And what can keep a sailor laddie from climbing where ivy grows as strong as a rope?" So up he went, clinging to the stout old ivy stems, and finding a foothold in the tangled vines, or the cracks and ledges of the rough stone wall.

"Now for my fun," said he as he reached the window, and the very next minute the bells rang out:

> Ding-a-ding-dong, Ding-a-dong-dell!

Everybody in Wraye waked up at the sound.

Ding-a-ding-dong, Ding-a-dong-dell.

"The pirates are coming!" called the mayor who had been a sailor himself when he was young.

"The town is on fire!" cried an old woman who was always expecting just such a happening.

"Thieves! Thieves!" screamed Dame Trot.

But no matter what was said or who said it, everybody hurried into his clothes and ran to the church as fast as he could run. The sexton with his nightcap set crooked on his head was the first one there.

"The door is locked," he cried, brandishing the key to prove his words.

"It is witchcraft," declared the beadle who had come off without his wig.

"Or a Christmas miracle," said the old parson who always thought the best of everything. And all the time they were talking the bells rang on:

Ding-a-ding-dong,
Ding-a-dong-dell.

"Witch, or robber, or what not, give me a look at this fine bell-ringer," said the innkeeper, and flourishing the poker that he had brought with him he bade the sexton open the door.

"But let me go first," said the parson. "It would be an evil deed to disturb an angel, if angel it should chance to be."

Everybody had an opinion or plan and spoke it out, but what with the bells dinging

and donging and every tongue in Wraye clicking and clacking it was hard to make head or tail of what was said.

At last, however, it was decided that the parson and the innkeeper should go together to the church tower, which was too small to hold more, while the rest of the people waited in the church below ready for whatever might happen.

But while they were making their plans Roger was making his. No sooner did he hear the parson and the innkeeper on the stair then he was out of the belfry window and scrambling down his ivy ladder. The joke would have been on the people of Wraye, and a good joke, too, if it had not been for Roger's mother.

She had not followed the rest into the church but still stood by the tower thinking, for she was always one to use her head, as the saying is.

"Tis just such a prank that a foolish laddie might play," she said to herself and it was just then that Roger, who was too full of laughter to be cautious in his climbing, fell over himself, as it were, and landed at her feet.

Another woman might have run away in fright, but Roger's mother was no coward.

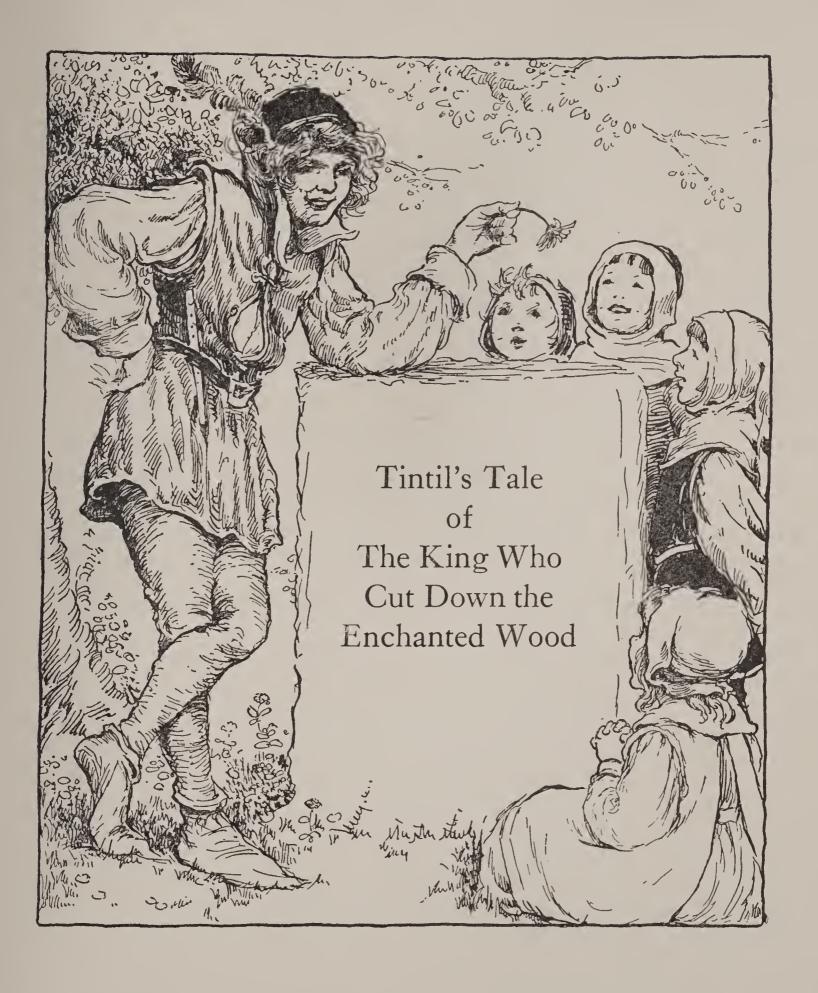
"Rogue," she cried, and she was lifting her hand to catch him by the collar when she caught a glimpse of his twinkling eyes.

The cry of joy that she gave brought the people of Wraye out of the church in a hurry, parson, innkeeper, sexton, beadle, and all; and every one of them asking questions at the same time. Master Roger was well pleased with the stir he had made. Why, what with talking and laughing and shaking Roger's hand to bid him

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welcome, and telling his mother what a fine lad he was, and going again and again to look at the church tower as if it were something new to see, there was no more sleep in the town of Wraye that night. And to cap all the sexton rang the merry bells again:

Ding-a-ding-dong, Ding-a-dong-dell!





THE KING WHO CUT DOWN THE ENCHANTED WOOD

HE wood that is called Enchanted lies in the centre of a kingdom, and it happened that once there came to the throne a king who did not believe in elves, nor fairies, nor anything magic.

He had not worn his crown long enough to get used to it when he sent for all the wood-choppers in his kingdom, and bade them go on a certain day to the Wood that is called Enchanted and cut it down.

"It is not an Enchanted Wood," said he, "for there is no such thing; but as long as it stands, people will call it enchanted, and the sooner it is down the better."

There was a great deal of sorrow in the land because of the king's decision, and many people tried to persuade him to change his mind.

One of these was a little maid who brought with her a treasure-box.

"See," said she, opening the box so that the king might look inside. "See, the pearls and rubies that came from the Enchanted Wood. If you cut it down I shall have no more jewels."

"Tut, tut," said the king. "There are only holly-berries and mistletoe. Real jewels are very fine and cost a great deal of money."

"Oh, but I pay for mine with pebble money," said the little maid; and she would have told him of her brother, the jewel merchant who



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climbed the tallest trees for the pearls and rubies, but the king's servants hurried her away to make room for the next petitioner, who was an old, old man.

"Every night I walk in the Wood that is called Enchanted and listen to the trees as they talk together," he told the king. "The old trees and the young trees, they have wonderful things to tell. Only last night I heard the beginning of a secret and if you cut down the Wood I may never know the end of it."

"But trees do not talk," said the king, and the old man was hurried off in his turn.

Then all the story-tellers who knew tales about the Wood came to the king.

"Once," said one of these," a child lay down in the Wood on a moonlit night, and saw four winds with his eyes shut."

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"How could he see four winds when there is only one?" asked the king. "And, besides, he was dreaming."

"But every year," said another story-teller, "a white doe comes into the Wood to get a honey-cake which the lord of the manor puts under a hazel-tree for her. It is said that when he was a child she watched over him as if she were his mother."

"Deer eat grass, not honey-cake," snapped the king; and so it went with every tale. The more he heard, the less he believed.

Then other people who loved pretty fancies and tales persuaded the king to go himself to the Wood.

"If he once gets into it he will never have the heart to cut it down," they said; but this, too, did no good. When the king was told to listen to a brook's song, he said there was nothing to hear but water trickling over stones. When a fairy ring was pointed out to him he said it was caused by dampness. No matter what he saw or heard, he was only the more set to cut down the Wood, and on the appointed day he sent the choppers to do his will. All day long the ring of their axes was heard in the Wood.

What became of the animals, no one knew. Some said they had gotten word of the king's purpose and gone away to the deep forest. But the birds flew above the workers, calling and crying as the trees fell. The brook was choked with rubbish and the fairy rings were trampled out of sight. By evening there was nothing left, and many a child went to bed that night sobbing as if his heart would break.

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"Where will the winds live now?" asked the child who lived with his grandmother in a little hut across from the place where the Wood had been.

"Never fret," said his grandmother. "The wide world is the wind's home, and as for the Wood, you shall see what you will see; and so shall the king."

Whatever that meant, the little boy went to sleep comforted, and next morning when he looked out what should he see but the Wood that is called Enchanted just where it had always been. Not a tree was missing, willows, aspens, hawthorns, hazels, and all, there they were with their green heads close together as if they were whispering secrets. The birds were twittering, and all the other little wild folk were back. The brook was singing its

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song as if it had never stopped, and there was a new fairy ring in the grass.

"But the king had the Wood cut down," said the little boy who could scarcely believe his own eyes.

"To be sure he did, and other kings before him have done the same," said his grandmother, "but nobody has ever yet been able to keep an Enchanted Wood from growing up again."











